WeAdU · Field Guide

Google Ads Best Practices for **Multi-Brand** Resellers

2022 Edition

The year Smart Shopping became Performance Max, expanded text ads froze, feed labels replaced countries and the Digital Markets Act was signed – what a multi-brand reseller should have done.

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1. The upgrade: Smart Shopping becomes Performance **Max**

On January 27, 2022, Google announced that a one-click tool to upgrade Smart Shopping campaigns to Performance Max would arrive in April, that "advertisers who upgrade Smart Shopping campaigns to Performance Max see an average increase of 12% in conversion value at the same or better return on ad spend," and set the timetable: "Smart Shopping campaigns will be automatically upgraded from July through September, and Local campaigns will be automatically upgraded from August through September." On April 26, Performance Max gained the new customer acquisition goal, asset audience insights and diagnostic insights. Settings, budgets and assets carried over; standard Shopping campaigns were untouched. For a multi-brand reseller, the automatic upgrade would copy whatever structure Smart Shopping had – one campaign per brand tier, or one for the whole catalogue – into a campaign type with far more reach and, in 2022, fewer controls.

- Upgrade on your own terms in April rather than Google's in July: one Performance Max campaign per brand tier whose brands share a margin and a return target, built from the Smart Shopping campaign of that tier, checked one at a time.
- Rebuild each campaign's asset groups by brand – the brand's imagery and text, its listing group filtered on the brand attribute, its audience signal – instead of accepting the single asset group the tool created.
- Set the new customer acquisition goal per campaign from that tier's repeat rate; it moved from Smart Shopping to Performance Max on April 26.
- Remember that Performance Max took priority over standard Shopping campaigns for the same products: the flagship campaign you kept in standard Shopping only served where the Performance Max campaign's listing groups excluded those products.

2. What Performance Max could and could not do in **2022**

Through the year Google added to Performance Max what the upgrade would need: on April 26, the new customer acquisition goal, asset audience insights and diagnostic insights; at Google Marketing Live on May 24, experiments, burst campaigns for short sales, and store-sales goals; on July 12, optimization score, seasonality adjustments, data exclusions, "presence" location targeting and explanations; on October 26, Performance Planner support, asset-group scheduling rules, product-level explanations for feed campaigns and first-party audience insights. What it did not have was any way to keep it off a brand's own searches: no brand exclusions, no campaign-level negative keywords, no search terms report.

- Keep every brand's Search campaign, with exact-match brand keywords, as the only reliable way to route a brand's own searches away from Performance Max in 2022; Google gave priority to an exact keyword identical to the search.
- Use the listing group, not hope, to decide what a campaign may sell: exclude from each tier's campaign the brands that belong to another tier, in the listing group itself.
- Use seasonality adjustments and data exclusions per campaign for the events specific to that tier's brands – a manufacturer's promotion, a supplier outage – rather than account-wide.
- Read the product-level explanations from October per brand: they were the first view of which products the automation had chosen to fund.

3. The end of expanded text **ads**

"Starting June 30, 2022, you'll no longer be able to create or edit expanded text ads." Announced on August 31, 2021, the freeze left responsive search ads as the only Search ad type that could be created or edited; existing expanded text ads kept serving and could be paused or removed. For a reseller with a hand-written ad per brand and model, the question was how to keep the brand-plus-model precision inside an ad whose headlines Google assembles.

- Pin the brand to headline one in every brand campaign's responsive search ad, and give the ad several model and range headlines to rotate; the pinned brand keeps the ad the brand's, the rotation keeps it responsive.
- Put the reseller relationship in a pinned description line where the trademark conditions require it; a rotating description can drop the sentence the policy relies on.
- Keep the best expanded text ad of each brand running alongside the responsive ad for a season, then compare per brand before pausing it.

4. Feed labels replace the target **country**

From August 23, 2022, the feed label replaced the target country in Merchant Center and the Content API: one feed can serve every country, and campaigns filter products by feed label. Google's developer notice was precise about the consequence: products inserted with a feed label instead of a target country "will not automatically target that country" – shipping settings decide where a product is eligible. For a reseller whose brands have different distribution rights in different countries, the feed label was the first native tool for saying which brand may sell where.

- Use feed labels for distribution rights, not only for language: one label per set of countries a brand may be sold in, assigned by a feed rule from the brand attribute, so that a brand without rights in a country never enters that country's campaign.
- Set shipping settings per country before relying on a label; a product with the right label and no shipping rate for the country does not serve there.
- Filter each Performance Max and Shopping campaign on its feed label, and check the products tab after the change for brands that disappeared from a country.

5. Merchant Center in 2022: pause, availability dates, price **insights**

On March 28, 2022, Google announced a price insights tool in Merchant Center, suggesting sale prices with a projected effect, a Trusted Store badge derived from the Shopping experience scorecard in the US, and conversion reporting for free listings. The April 27 specification update added a *pause* attribute that keeps a product in the feed while pausing its ads, and made a missing country in *shipping* an error. From June 26, *availability_date* was required for pre-order and backorder products, and all accounts were opted into automatic item updates for condition. For a reseller, the *pause* attribute was the small change with the largest use: a brand's product could leave the auction for a week without leaving the feed.

- Use *pause* for the brand whose supplier has just raised prices or missed a delivery, set by a feed rule on the brand attribute, instead of deleting products and losing their history.
- Read price insights per brand as suggestions to test against margin, never as instructions; the tool projects clicks and sales, not profit.
- Keep the Trusted Store signals – shipping speed, returns, ratings – true for every brand, because the badge is the store's.

6. Measurement: the Universal Analytics deadline and the cookie **reprieve**

On March 16, 2022, Google announced that standard Universal Analytics properties would stop processing data on July 1, 2023, and that Google Analytics 4 would be the only Analytics from then on. On February 11 the UK Competition and Markets Authority accepted Google's Privacy Sandbox commitments, and on July 27 Chrome pushed the end of third-party cookies to the second half of 2024. On August 30, Smart Bidding gained separate value levers for store visits and store sales. For a reseller, the brand-level Analytics reporting built since Enhanced Ecommerce in 2014 had a deadline.

- Build the Google Analytics 4 property in 2022 and run it in parallel for a full year, with item brand sent on every view, add-to-cart and purchase, so that brand-level history exists before the old property stops.
- Link the new property to Google Ads and check that brand-level conversion values match the old ones before switching the bidding to them.
- Use the store visits and store sales levers per brand tier where the in-store margin differs from the online one.

7. Similar audiences: the sunset is **announced**

On November 1, 2022, Google announced that from May 2023 "new similar audiences segments will stop being generated, and existing similar audiences segments will no longer be added to campaigns and ad groups", with removal from all campaigns in August 2023, in favour of optimized targeting, audience expansion and Smart Bidding. For a reseller, the lookalikes built from the store's buyer list since 2017 had a shelf life; the buyer list itself did not.

- Move the weight from similar audiences to the Customer Match list itself, applied as an audience signal in Performance Max and as an observed audience in Search; the signal survives, the lookalike does not.
- Note which brand campaigns relied on similar audiences for volume, and test optimized targeting on those first, brand by brand, before the May cut-off.

8. Holiday tiles: badges, coupons and price **insights**

On November 1, 2022, Google added promotion badges, coupon clipping, side-by-side deal comparisons and price insights – "low, typical, or high" against the product's usual price – to Search in the US. At Google Marketing Live in May it had announced visual-first apparel results, larger visual Shopping ad slots, loyalty benefits shown in free listings and through Performance Max and Customer Match, and product feeds in YouTube Shorts. For a reseller selling the same models as every other authorised reseller, the tile now told the shopper whether the price was a good one – before the click.

- Push manufacturer promotions through Merchant Promotions so they carry the badge, and set the promotion's dates to the brand's, not the store's.
- Watch the price insight per model: a "high" label on a model you cannot discount is a model to exclude from the promotion campaigns, not to bid harder on.
- Submit the loyalty program if you run one; on a price-matched tile, a loyalty benefit is a differentiator that the brand's minimum advertised price does not forbid.

9. Europe: the Digital Markets Act is signed; Google **appeals**

On January 20, 2022, Google appealed the General Court's Shopping judgment to the Court of Justice. The Digital Markets Act received the Council's final approval on July 18, 2022, was signed on September 14 and entered into force on November 1, 2022, applying from May 2023, with gatekeepers to be designated and given six months to comply. For a British or European reseller, nothing changed in the account in 2022.

- Nothing to change in 2022. Worth noting: the Act's self-preferencing rules aimed at the same Shopping unit the 2017 remedy had opened to comparison-shopping services,.

10. What was **new** in 2022 – and what each thing turned into

Ten dated changes from the year, in order, each with what it became:

- **January 27 – the upgrade to Performance Max announced; Google appeals the Shopping judgment (January 20).** Upgrade complete by September.
- **March 16 – Universal Analytics sunset set for July 1, 2023.**

- **March 28 and 29 – price insights and Trusted Store badge in Merchant Center; Google Ads Editor 2.0 with Performance Max.** Both standard tools.
- **April 26 and 27 – new customer acquisition goal in Performance Max; the pause attribute.** Both in daily use.
- **May 24 – Google Marketing Live: experiments and burst campaigns for Performance Max, visual Shopping ads, loyalty benefits, feeds in Shorts.**
- **June 30 – expanded text ads frozen.** Responsive search ads only.
- **July 12 – seasonality adjustments, data exclusions and explanations for Performance Max.** Standard controls.
- **August 23 and 30 – feed labels replace the target country; store visits and store sales value levers.** Both in force.
- **October 26 – Performance Planner, asset-group scheduling and product-level explanations for Performance Max.**
- **November 1 – similar audiences sunset announced; deal badges and price insights in Search.** Similar audiences removed August 2023.

11. What the numbers showed: Performance Max takes over **Shopping**

Tinuiti's benchmark for the second quarter of 2022 found that Google Shopping ads accounted for 64% of retailers' total spending on Google search ads, up from 56% a year earlier, with Shopping spend up 26% on 18% more clicks and 76% of Shopping advertisers still running Smart Shopping in June. By the fourth quarter, 80% of Google Shopping advertisers used Performance Max, whose costs per click ran 3% below standard Shopping with a 31% higher click-through rate; Google search spend was up 10% and Shopping clicks up 16% with cost per click down 3%. Adobe measured US online holiday spending at $211.7 billion, up 3.5%, with Cyber Monday at $11.3 billion.

- Compare Performance Max with the standard Shopping campaign of the same brand tier on return, not on click-through rate: a cheaper, more-clicked tile that sells the wrong brand is not a better tile.
- Read the Performance Max product-level explanations per brand against the standard campaign's product groups to see which brands the automation chose to fund and which it starved.

12. A five-minute **check**

CHECK	WHY IT MATTERS
Smart Shopping upgraded in April, one Performance Max campaign per brand tier, one asset group per brand	The automatic upgrade copies whatever structure exists
Brand Search campaigns kept with exact-match brand keywords; listing groups exclude other tiers' brands	No brand exclusions or campaign negatives in Performance Max in 2022
Responsive search ads per brand: brand pinned in headline one, reseller status pinned in a description	Expanded text ads frozen from June 30
Feed labels assigned by brand for distribution rights; shipping settings per country	A label alone does not target a country
pause attribute used for supplier problems; availability_date on pre-orders and backorders	Leave the auction without leaving the feed
Google Analytics 4 running in parallel with item brand on every event	Universal Analytics ends July 1, 2023
Customer Match list as the audience signal; similar-audience dependence noted per brand	Lookalikes stop in May 2023
Promotions pushed for badges; "high" price insights excluded from promotion campaigns	The tile now judges the price before the click

About **WeAdU**

WeAdU is a Google Premier Partner and the current home of a Google Ads practice founded in 2002, focused on AI-boosted Google Ads for brand product resellers.

Across the client book: **$241M+** in sales generated, **$132M+** tracked in Google Ads, **$32M+** in ad spend managed and **5.3M+** conversions. **14 of 20** clients (**70%**) saw a higher ROAS, measured over 12 months.

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This edition is a retrospective written in September 2026, not a document from 2022: it describes Google Ads, Shopping ads, Google Shopping and Merchant Center as they worked that year, checked against sources published at the time or reliable later accounts, listed below.

Sources & further reading

Google, The Keyword / Google Ads Help / Google Ads Developers blog: "Upgrade to Performance Max" (January 27, 2022) and the upgrade FAQ (answers 11576060, 12117037); "Prepare for the future with Google Analytics 4" (March 16, 2022); "Shoptalk 2022" – price insights, Trusted Store badge, free-listings conversion reporting (March 28, 2022); Performance Max updates (April 26, 2022, answer 12117037); Google Marketing Live retail recap (May 24, 2022, answers 12158560, 12172007); expanded text ads (answers 7056544, 12169708); Performance Max updates (July 12, 2022, answer 12351101; October 26, 2022, answer 12926236); Smart Shopping upgrade reminders (July 21, 2022, answer 12368488); "Feed label replaces target country" (Google Ads Developers blog, August 10, 2022); store visits and store sales value levers (August 30, 2022, answer 12487857); business name and logo in Search ads (October 14, 2022, answer 12834372); "Holiday shopping deals" – badges, coupon clipping, price insights (November 1, 2022); similar audiences sunset (November 1, 2022, answer 12929853); Merchant Center pause attribute (answer 11909930); Chrome – updated timeline for Privacy Sandbox (July 27, 2022); Performance Max priority over standard Shopping (Search Engine Roundtable, October 22, 2024). Council of the European Union – final approval of the Digital Markets Act (July 18, 2022); European Commission – Digital Markets Act legislation pages. Independent: Search Engine Land – Smart Shopping and Local campaigns to Performance Max (January 27, 2022), Google Ads Editor v2 (March 29, 2022), single feed for all countries (August 2022), Merchant Center changes (2022), similar audiences (November 2022), Universal Analytics deprecation (March 16, 2022); Search Engine Journal – similar audiences sunset (November 2022), Google Ads Editor (March 2022), Universal Analytics 360 (October 2022), expanded text ads sunset (August 31, 2021); Search Engine Roundtable – Trusted Store badge (March 29, 2022), product data specification updates (April 28, 2022); Reuters – Google's appeal (January 20, 2022); UK Competition and Markets Authority – Privacy Sandbox commitments (February 11, 2022); Tinuiti – Google Ads benchmark reports Q2 2022, Q3 2022 (MediaPost), Q4 2022 (January 30, 2023) and Q4 2024; CNBC and Adobe – holiday 2022 figures (January 5, 2023). Policies and product names have changed since 2022; the 2026 edition describes the current rules.